



Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Whitehall Place London SW1A 2HH

From the Minister's Private Office

Mike Pattison Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
London SW1

11 March 1980

Dear Mike,

We spoke this morning about Austen Laing's letter of 7 March to the Prime Minister and I explained that my Minister was strongly opposed to any idea that Austen Laing might have a meeting with the Prime Minister when she is seeing representatives of the fishing industry at Hull and when Austen Laing was specifically invited to attend this meeting but decided not to do so because he was going on holiday-and himself suggested the alternative of Mr Parkes who will be attending.

--- My Minister suggests that the Prime Minister reply in the terms of the attached draft.

--- I attach a copy of Austen Laing's letter for convenience.

I am copying the letter to Geoffrey Robson.

*Your sincerely
Frances.*

MISS F H THOMPSON
Assistant Private
Secretary

DRAFT LETTER TO AUSTEN LAING CBE, DIRECTOR GENERAL, BRITISH
FISHING FEDERATION

Thank you for your letter of 7 March. I am, of course, very well acquainted with the current problems of the fishing industry as both Peter Walker and George Younger have kept me and their Cabinet colleagues closely informed of the situation.

I know also that they have taken every possible action to keep the fishing industry informed of our negotiations for a Community fishing policy. I gather that before every Brussels meeting, and during, they remain in close consultation with the leaders of the industry.

I know that following such a meeting in January Peter Walker asked for information from the industry in order that he could decide what actions might be necessary to sustain the industry during a difficult period.

Likewise, when George Younger met leaders of the industry in Scotland he invited them to prepare a paper for him, both upon the problems and the method of tackling them.

I have maintained a very close personal interest and as for your suggestion of a meeting with the industry, you will know that I am visiting Hull on Friday and ~~made enquiries about~~ ~~gave an invitation to you~~

inviting you

to discuss matters with me there; but I gather that you are going on holiday. I will, nevertheless, have an opportunity on that occasion of further discussions with representatives of your industry, including Neil Parkes.

I know, however, that you will be aware that during the months we have been in office Peter Walker ^{George Younger} and Alick Buchanan-Smith have devoted a great deal of time and energy throughout the Community. Largely due to their efforts, progress is now being made towards a Community fishing policy and I hope that you and the industry will continue to give them every support in their efforts.